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# THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

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## TRADE SCHOOLS IN LONDON

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Before entering on the question of trade schools I should point out that in London under the London County Council there is a very elaborate scholarship scheme consisting of Junior, Intermediate, and Senior scholarships which makes ample provision for all the children of exceptional ability in the elementary schools. The normal age of competition for the Junior scholarships is between eleven and twelve years of age, but arrangements are now being made for a further contingent at the age of thirteen for children who develop later than the normal child.

When a Junior scholarship is won the child is transferred from the elementary to a secondary school in which he or she receives free education with a small maintenance allowance at first, which increases considerably at the age of fourteen when, under ordinary conditions, the child might leave the elementary school. If the scholar does well in the secondary school the Intermediate scholarships which are of higher value are open for competition, and the child who is successful may remain at the same secondary school or be transferred to one of higher grade and receive, in addition to free education, a higher maintenance allowance than he received as a Junior scholar. Further, if successful in obtaining a Senior scholarship the boy or girl may go on to Oxford or Cambridge, or technical institutions of university rank in England or abroad for a period of three years with a very substantial maintenance allowance. Thus a

pupil may be on the scholarship ladder for over ten years and pass from the elementary school to the secondary school and afterward graduate at one of the ancient universities with practically no cost to his parents since he left the elementary school.

The number of scholarships awarded in each stage is large and will probably be increased still further by the Council should the necessity arise. It may, therefore, be taken for granted that ample provision is made for the specially gifted child, however poor its parents may be. The examinations on which these scholarships are won are based on the ordinary subjects of instruction. In addition to the general scholarship scheme special provisions are made to encourage and endow artistic ability. Scholarships of increasing value are given to students of special promise, and in a scheme now under consideration provision is made for the award of art scholarships to the value of £50 a year tenable for three years.

The brilliant child is therefore well provided for and may eventually become fully equipped for one of the learned professions or one of the higher walks of industrial life.

Other children, though not sufficiently brilliant to gain scholarships for secondary schools at the age of eleven, may be sufficiently clever to be transferred to a higher school of elementary type at the age of twelve and there obtain, though not a trade education, education of a more or less specialized type, and with a higher leaving age than is the case at the ordinary elementary school.

After thus making provision for the abnormal child the problem of problems becomes, How can we prevent the boy or girl of normal intelligence from drifting into the ranks of unskilled labor at the age of fourteen? The difficulty here is seriously increased by the fact that there is not the slightest difficulty in a healthy, moderately well-educated, well-conducted child finding employment at a rate of remuneration which for a child of this age appears very liberal indeed. The point is, however, that in the vast majority of cases such employment does not lead to advancement financially or otherwise, and in a few years'

time, after the child has deteriorated intellectually and is less well educated than at the time of leaving school, the employment for which young children are better suited comes to an end and the boy or girl sinks into the ranks of the unemployed or into the lower departments of unskilled labor. It has been found that for the poor type of child it is, under present conditions, quite impossible to insure two or three years' continuous instruction after the age of fourteen unless some grant for maintenance is made which will recoup the parents for the loss they sustain by not letting their children enter unskilled employment.

In order to bridge over the serious gap between the ages of fourteen and seventeen a new type of school, the trade school, has come into existence which is destined in the future to play a very important part in London education.

The origin of this type of school is due to the changed conditions of modern industry and the total disappearance in some, and the gradual disappearance in others, of the apprenticeship system in many of the London industries. The trade school movement has been much influenced more recently by the desire expressed by both employers and employees of the bookbinding and printing trades and the goldsmiths', silversmiths', jewelers', and allied trades for better preparation in technical and artistic preliminary training of boys before entering the workshop and while serving apprenticeship, with a view eventually to raise the standard of work in their particular crafts. This interest has been shown by employers by their keen desire as members of consultative committees to assist the Council with advice in various ways. In the past there was no connection between day schools and the trades and industries of London. These trade schools are now supplying this link. The pupils attending are classed as (1) fee paying, (2) those that have been awarded free places, and (3) scholarship holders with maintenance allowance. It is interesting to note with reference to the latter the great increase in the number of scholarships granted by the London County Council for these schools. In 1905 there were 32, in 1906 there were 310, including 80 for girls to enter the girls' trade schools, while in 1909, 610 have been authorized,

of which over 300 are for girls. The competition for these scholarships is very keen indeed. Thus at the last competition for 90 of these scholarships which carry maintenance allowances of £6 per year for the first year, £6 or £10 for the second, and £15 for the third, there were 534 candidates.

The course in the trade schools for boys lasts three years and the general principle that underlies the instruction given is that the pupils' general education is continued and closely co-ordinated with the particular craft work taught. The amount of time devoted to craft work is about half the total, from about one-third in the first year to two-thirds in the last, and this is taught in a way which is genuinely educational as well as preparatory to the future occupation of the boy.

The staff consists of a headmaster, a chief technical instructor, and assistants who are specially selected and are experts in the particular art or craft they teach and who have also had a workshop training. The staff also includes a science, an art, and an English master.

The following schools work with the definite object of preparing boys for entering specific industries. In the Shoreditch Technical Institute, which has a great reputation as a technical school for the furniture trades and is one of the oldest established of the London trade schools, the maintenance grant is £6 for the first year, £10 for the second, and £15 for the third year, the increase in value from year to year being for the purpose of meeting the increased temptation on the part of the parents to make the boy a wage-earner. The course for furniture and cabinet making at this school consists of English subjects, arithmetic and mensuration, geometry and geometrical drawing, freehand and model drawing, design work associated with wood and metal, modeling in clay, elementary experimental science, workshops and technical drawing, technology of woods and metals, and a large amount of bench work for the use of woodwork and metal working tools. The time allotted to the theoretical and practical workshop lessons is roughly equal to that allotted to the English, mathematical, and science subjects. This school prepares boys to enter the furniture and woodwork

trades as cabinet makers, carpenters, joiners, shop fitters, pattern makers, turners, wood carvers, or trade draughtsmen.

In the Central School of Arts and Crafts, which is far and away the finest school of this type in England, there is a special day department to prepare boys to enter some branch of the silversmithing trade or kindred crafts in silversmiths', goldsmiths', or jewelers' work as tracers, engravers, mounters, draughtsmen, etc. Next session there will also be a book-production school in this building, which will give suitable training for boys entering the printing and bookbinding trades. In this school it has been arranged that at the end of the first year the boy shall be apprenticed to firms of good standing, and the time spent in the school after the boy is fourteen years of age will count as part of the period of apprenticeship. The course of instruction will extend over three years, from thirteen to sixteen.

Another interesting school also under the control of the Council is the Brixton School of Building which prepares boys for the building trades and allied professions. In this school boys may qualify as bricklayers, masons, plumbers, painters, architects, builders, and surveyors.

Another trade school which is doing excellent pioneer work is housed in the Borough Polytechnic. In this school the boys have the advantage of working in well-equipped laboratories and workshops used by adult students in the evening classes. This school, while not preparing for any specific trade, gives a general training extending over three years for boys entering the various branches of the engineering trade or any kind of metal work. It is probable that schools of a similar kind will be established in other polytechnics in which there is sufficient accommodation for a school of this type during the day time.

At present most of the trade scholarships for boys are awarded in engineering, silversmithing, bookbinding, furniture and cabinet making, carriage building, wood carving, and for the building trades.

The scholarships awarded to girls are for trade dressmaking, laundry work, upholstery, ladies' tailoring, waistcoat making,

corset making, millinery, designing and making of ready-made clothing, and photography. As a rule, trade scholarships for girls are for a period of two years with a maintenance grant of £8 for the first year and £12 for the second year, in addition to free education.

The most important day trade school for girls is the London County Council's school at Bloomsbury. Here there are about one hundred and fifty girls in the first or second year of the course of training. The subjects taken at this school are corset making, dressmaking, ladies' tailoring, millinery, and photography. In all departments there are trade teachers. A very special feature is the art instruction at this school, which has for its object not only the acquiring of technical skill in the drawing required in various departments, but the general cultivation of a refined artistic sense, which is of much importance in all grades of trade work. Two-thirds of the time of this school is devoted to trade instruction and the remainder to the general education of the pupil, with special reference to the requirements of each trade. The subjects of instruction in general education include English, arithmetic, drawing, hygiene, and physical exercises. The school is open five days a week from 9 A. M. to 12:45 P. M. and from 1:45 to 5 P. M.

It is not necessary to enter into any further description of the trade schools for girls as they are based in almost every particular very largely upon the model of the *Ecole Professionnelle* of Paris, with the exception that in Paris maintenance grants are very rarely given and in London a very large proportion of the girls in each school are scholarship holders.

The fees for the trade schools are very low so that candidates who are unable to obtain scholarships may attend at very small cost, and in many cases where candidates have acquitted themselves creditably at the examination they are allowed free places at the schools though they may have failed to obtain scholarships which carry with them maintenance grants.

In order to insure that trade scholarships are given only to children of parents who are unable to maintain their children at school without assistance, no candidate is eligible whose parents

or guardians are in receipt of an income which exceeds £160 a year from all sources. In order to prevent scholarship funds being wasted, the awards are conditional on the candidates passing a satisfactory probationary period of three months at the trade school with no payment for maintenance but simply free tuition, and if at the end of the period of probation an unsatisfactory report on the scholar is received, the scholarship is withdrawn. The parents or guardians of scholars are, moreover, required to sign a declaration that they intend the scholars to enter the trade in which they have received training during the tenure of their scholarships. These safeguards work very satisfactorily and the result is that a very large percentage of scholarship winners find permanent employment in the trades for which they have been prepared.

It will be interesting to hear in the discussion on this paper why it is that in Canada, the United States, Germany, and to a lesser extent France, it is possible to secure good attendance at trade schools without the assistance of maintenance scholarships.

As stated above, the decay of the apprenticeship system has been an important factor in necessitating the establishment of trade schools in which boys or girls may become sufficiently skilful to enable them to enter with intelligence into any department of the workshop in which they may be placed. The trade school, moreover, has a distinct advantage over the old system of apprenticeship for the following reasons:

1. The supervision in a well-equipped trade school is generally of a much more efficient order than even that of a well-ordered workshop.

2. Culture subjects are not neglected, and consequently the general education of the boys or girls is continued in a manner suitable to the trade for which they are preparing.

3. In the apprenticeship system there is a natural tendency for the apprentice to become attached to some special department of the work to the serious neglect of others.

4. In following out a definite curriculum under a well-arranged time-table there is very little waste of time, and the balance of theoretical and practical work is properly maintained.



5. The work of a trade school is generally governed by a consultative committee of experts who are to a large extent responsible for the education of the students being carried on under the best trade conditions.

6. The presence of trade experts with experience of teaching, who are always at hand in the workshop and able to solve any difficulties which may arise, means an enormous saving of time as compared with the case of the apprentice who has to wait the convenience of the foreman for the solution of difficulties.

It thus happens that the boy who has had a continuous course of instruction in a good trade school for a couple of years may have acquired as much skill and knowledge as one who has worked for four years under the conditions attached to an apprenticeship.

Of recent years there has been an enormous advance in London in the establishment of trade schools and in the facilities offered to students of all grades who are anxious to enter the various trades.

The movement with regard to trade schools would have been doomed to failure if employers had not realized the great value of the course of instruction received. The result is that there is no difficulty in finding employment for those who have satisfactorily passed through a full course of training, and it is generally found that in periods of depression the more skilled students from the trade schools retain their employment when others are dismissed.

A very important development in connection with trade schools is the establishment of "Voluntary After Care Committees," the members of which interest themselves in the scholars at the trade schools and take an interest in them after they have been successfully placed in workshops. A committee of this kind is of extreme value, as it can obtain information as to the conditions of work in the various shops and can give valuable assistance to those who are seeking employment, and, moreover, where short periods of apprenticeship are arranged it

can see that under the conditions of the indentures the interests of the boys and girls are safeguarded.

A most important element in the success of the trade schools is the alliance of the school with the trade by means of the expert consultative committee. The arrangements which have been found to work very smoothly in London are based on the following regulations:

1. A consultative committee of trade experts shall consist of an equal number of:

a) Representatives of the Council to be selected as far as possible from well-known experts in the subject concerned, or persons of experience in the administration of technical education.

b) Representatives of the trade, one-half of whom shall be representatives of the employers and one-half of the employees.

2. The representatives of the employers and employees shall be appointed on the respective recommendations of the leading associations of employers and trade-unions of the industry concerned.

3. The chairman of the consultative committee shall be nominated by the Council from among the Council's representatives.

4. The consultative committee shall act solely in an advisory capacity.

It will be seen by the above regulations that the functions of the consultative committee are nominally advisory only, but, as a matter of fact, committees in dealing with the proposals of the consultative committees give great weight to their well-considered decisions, and unless this were done it is highly probable that the business men holding important positions, who now serve on the consultative committees, would cease to act.

An important point arises in regard to the trade school, and that is as to the ultimate effect that a general intimate connection with trades may have upon the artistic side of the trade-school work, the standard of taste which prevails in many trades being very far from ideal and the general conditions not being altogether conducive to the development of the artistic faculty

of the craftsman. It is a matter of extreme importance that this danger should be carefully watched and provision be made to provide facilities and opportunities for the free artistic development of the persons engaged in the various crafts. The great safeguard against such a downward tendency is in the work of the fine arts, and arts and crafts schools where the attendance at classes is not in any way restricted to people engaged only in a trade or industry. These schools, however, give an artistic training, and in the case of arts and crafts schools also provide practical teaching of some of the crafts in properly fitted workshops. The majority of the classes in these schools, however, are untrammelled by commercial or trade considerations and are, therefore, enabled to work out high ideals and to serve a most useful purpose in assisting to lead and cultivate the public taste and to give a knowledge of and create the desire for beautiful things. In fact they may largely be regarded, to some extent at any rate, as culture classes. It is useless making beautiful things unless there is an appreciative public.

In connection with these schools there is an excellent scholarship scheme by which promising artistic material may be given every facility for development under favorable conditions without financial embarrassment. Some of the scholarships thus open for competition are tenable at the most renowned art schools in London.

In addition to the full-time trade schools there are many polytechnics and technical schools in London working in conjunction with employers of labor in connection with the part-time education of certain grades of their employees. Thus boys at the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, for example, attend for instruction at given times at the Woolwich Polytechnic, all expenses being borne by the War Office. Similarly the apprentices in the engineering workshops of the South Western Railway Company attend day classes at the Battersea Polytechnic.

In connection with the silversmithing trades, in addition to free education for selected apprentices, bursaries are granted by the London County Council at the rate of 8 *d.* an hour for time spent in technical instruction at special day classes in con-

nection with the silversmiths' craft. These bursaries cover traveling expenses and the apprentices' loss of time from their work. Arrangements of this kind are capable of unlimited extension.

In conclusion another point should be made in connection with this subject, and that is the admirable provision made in all parts of London for evening classes in polytechnics and similar institutions in connection with the various trades. These classes are strictly limited to students who are already engaged in the trade, and are taught by teachers who hold important positions in their craft. The enthusiasm with which thousands of young artisans after a long day's work will attend for theoretical and practical instruction in the scientific principles of their trades under skilled craftsmen is one of the most pleasing features in London education.